

Spring 2020 Alternative Grading Option Policy for Undergraduate Students

This policy applies *only* to undergraduate students and *only* to undergraduate courses. It is in effect for *only* the Spring 2020 semester. Under this new policy, the College introduces an alternative **Satisfactory/Satisfactory D/Fail** grading option for undergraduate students enrolled in undergraduate courses during the Spring 2020 semester.

While students may decide not to change their grade mode (whether a letter grade [A-F] or a traditional S/U) in their spring 2020 classes, the S/SD/F grade mode may be a sensible option, depending on individual circumstances. Students are encouraged to consult with their academic adviser, instructors, and financial aid prior to electing S/SD/F and to **READ THE IMPORTANT THINGS TO CONSIDER SECTION BELOW BEFORE MAKING THE GRADE CHANGE.**

The alternative S/SD/F grading option is as follows:

- **Satisfactory (S):** Students earning a letter grade of “C-” or better will be awarded a grade of “S” (satisfactory) and will earn credits for the course. Courses recorded as “S” will count toward the major or minor, the Liberal Arts core curriculum, and fulfill prerequisite requirements for subsequent courses required for the program of study.
- **Satisfactory D (SD):** Students earning a letter grade of “D-/D/D+” will be awarded a grade of “SD” (satisfactory D) and will earn credits for the course. Courses recorded as SD may satisfy any requirement that only requires a D- or better. If a student has to earn a C- or better in a course to fulfill a requirement (e.g., major, minor, prerequisite, or other requirement), then an SD will not satisfy that requirement.
- **Fail (F):** Students failing a course will receive a letter grade of “F” and will earn no credits.
- Courses completed with an “S/SD” grade are not included in any grade point average (GPA) calculations.
- Failed courses with an “F” grade will be included in grade point average (GPA) calculations.
- Students who request an incomplete (I) grade for the semester **may not** elect the alternative grade option for the incomplete course. Incomplete courses must receive a final letter grade.

Students will be able to elect the alternative grading option for *any or all* of their courses beginning April 20 until Friday, May 1 at 4 pm EDT. Course instructors will not be informed which students elect the alternative grading option.

At the end of the Spring 2020 semester, faculty will post final course grades in letter grade format by May 26 at 12 pm EDT. The Office of Academic Records will then change grades for selected courses to S or SD (or retain any F), whichever is appropriate for course performance, as indicated above. **Once the alternative grading option is requested, it is irrevocable and will not be reverted to standard A-F grading at any point in time for any reason.**

Students are encouraged to discuss grading options with their adviser(s) in advance of April 20. Advisers, who will receive notification when an advisee elects the alternative grading option, may recommend against such a change for various reasons (e.g., graduate or professional program entry requirements, athletic eligibility, effort to improve cumulative GPA, etc.) However, the choice to select the alternative grading option resides with the individual student.

The alternative grading option is only available for courses taken in the Spring 2020 semester and will not be available for any subsequent term. Students who are taking Spring 2020 classes that may only be taken Pass/Fail (e.g., internships, activity credits) or who have already selected the Pass/Fail grading option for a given course are not affected by this policy.

Important Things to Consider

Reasons to stay with the letter grade option:

- You are doing well in the course and expect to continue to do well.
- Your expected course grade will raise your GPA or be consistent with your current GPA.
- You need to raise your GPA to return to good academic standing (SEE OTHER ATTACHMENT INCLUDED IN EMAIL -- SPRING 2020 "ALTERNATIVE ACADEMIC STANDING POLICY")
- You need to raise your GPA above the 2.0 threshold for graduation.
- You need to raise your GPA for a specific major (Education, Exercise Science)
- A course is required for a post-graduate professional program (e.g., medical school) as it is unclear how these programs will view this grading scheme for Spring 2020. Currently, a grade of S is frequently not allowed for many professional programs.
- A course is required for a combined degree program (e.g., 3+2 engineering).

Reasons to switch to the alternative grade option:

- The shift to remote teaching and learning causes you to fear you would not perform as well as you would have in the regular format.
- The shift to remote teaching and learning has resulted in your needing to focus on some classes more than others (elect the S/SD/F in the class for which you must have a diminished focus).
- You legitimately feel you are underperforming and are concerned about lowering your GPA.
- To help provide relief from a course load for an elective.
- You have impediments to remote learning, such as inconsistent access to the internet.
- An alternative to taking a Withdraw by April 17th.
- It is ok to maintain your current GPA (it is not necessary for you to raise it).

Additional considerations

- Satisfactory/Satisfactory D (S/SD) grades will not impact your GPA one way or the other.
- If you are considering graduate school, be sure to speak to your adviser about how S/SD/F grading may impact this decision.
- If you are on Satisfactory Academic Progress warning or probation for Financial Aid, be sure to consult the Financial Aid Office (FinancialAid@franklincollege.edu).
- Athletes must be in good academic standing to participate in the 2020-2021 academic year (see academic standing requirements above).